

# ***BASIC INFORMATION***

## ***For the***

### ***SKILLSUSA LEADER***

#### **PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY**

SkillsUSA is a national organization serving high school and college students and instructors who are enrolled in training programs in technical, skilled, and service occupations, including health occupations. It consists of two major divisions: one serving students enrolled in high school occupational programs and the other serving students at the postsecondary level. Each division operates at the local, state and national level. Students form classroom or school chapters with the assistance of their teacher or advisor. Chapter activities are an essential and integral part of the student's professional development. SkillsUSA believes that every student should enter the labor market with salable job skills, a positive attitude, and qualities of character, citizenship and trade ethics. In addition, they will gain a general understanding of the system of free enterprise in which they will spend their entire working life. SkillsUSA bases its mission on the premise that the skilled technician must have **more** than just technical and occupational skills.

#### **HOW SKILLSUSA DEVELOPS STUDENTS**

SkillsUSA uses three methods to help students with personal development. These are applied leadership training, Professional Development Program (PDP) and competition.

Leadership Training...in such vital areas as public speaking, parliamentary procedure, group dynamics and cooperation with others is an essential part of the SkillsUSA program. In addition, the SkillsUSA member has the opportunity to take part in local, district, state and national leadership conferences that offer the opportunity to practice learned skills. SkillsUSA believes students should provide leadership in activities that affect their work, community, school and nation.

Professional Development Program...The *SkillsUSA Professional Development Program* (PDP) guides students through more than 80 employability skills lessons that are covered in seven levels of the program. Skills lessons include self-assessments of communications skills, ethics, conflict resolution, government awareness, time management skills, career research, and more. Use of the curriculum encourages local business involvement in the training of tomorrow's entry-level workers. The curriculum's strength lies in its flexibility. It can be used as an individual self-development course or for group instruction. It can be integrated into the existing curriculum or used as a separate course of study.

Students who complete levels 1-4 can go on to levels 5-6, the American SkillsUSA Degree and the International SkillsUSA Degree. SkillsUSA knowledge is integrated throughout the program on his or her organization. PDP gives instructors a practical vehicle for integrating employment skills into the vocational or technical program. Students are recognized for individual achievement as they develop professional and occupational skills. PDP also opens doors to the involvement of local employers in student development and evaluation.

Competition... SkillsUSA members compete in occupational and leadership contests at local, state and national levels. The SkillsUSA Championships is a program that gives SkillsUSA members recognition as young workers, develops pride in their occupation, and confidence. Contest winners receive gold, silver and bronze medallions. Under SkillsUSA'S leadership, the United States has been admitted as a participating nation in the World Skills Competition. This means that some selected winners from the SkillsUSA Championships will be competing, as well as exchanging ideas with young skilled workers from many nations throughout the world. International competition offers us many opportunities to learn from each other as individuals. SkillsUSA provides contestants in several international skill events normally held in Europe or Asia.

### **SKILLSUSA: AN INTEGRAL PART OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT**

An essential component in career and technical education is the link that must exist between the training program and industry. Unless we communicate with those who will employ our students, our programs will run the risk of being irrelevant and obsolete. Where there are SkillsUSA Chapters, relationships with industry must exist if career and technical programs are to succeed. During the over thirty years of SkillsUSA'S existence, industry has become more involved in the training programs of career and technical education. In many industries throughout the United States, commitments are being made to request graduates that have SkillsUSA leadership and personal development as part of their programs.

SkillsUSA is a curriculum for use in the classroom and laboratory by the occupational instructor. It is a tool that, if used properly, will motivate students, improve their enthusiasm for learning and give them a better understanding of the inter-workings of industry, labor and management. SkillsUSA activities serve as a window for career and technical education and improves the self-image of the participating students by giving them wholesome and distinctive identities. We live in a complex industrial society with ever-increasing pressure, and an instructor should be concerned with the total development of the student. SkillsUSA offers an essential dimension in technical, skilled, and service occupations programs, including health occupations.

As has been said many times, there is a gap between technology and people. Our ever-increasing technological knowledge tends to make many of our students feel less confident in their abilities. Where there are active SkillsUSA programs, we show success in countering this feeling by helping the student develop a broad range of skills. These include academic, leadership, and employability skills in addition to technical and occupational skills. This package of skills develops the confidence students need to succeed in the global workplaces of the future. Success in their first job will lead to a career for a lifetime